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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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The Agricultural Manpower Situation

About 1,600,000 farm workers and operators left agriculture to go into industry and the armed forces between September 1941 and September 1942. Included in this total are 381,000 farm operators or managers and 1,234,000 farm family workers and year-round hired workers (Table 1).

These estimates of gross losses to farm employment are based on a nationwide farm labor survey in which 6,100 farmers in 567 counties were interviewed about the labor situation on their farms, and were asked to comment on the outlook for next year. No information was secured as to the losses of workers hired for only short periods.

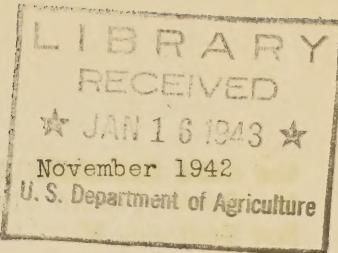
Entrance into the armed forces accounted for the loss of 694,000 farmers and farm workers and shifts into nonfarm jobs accounted for the loss of 921,000 persons. Slightly less than three-fourths (73 percent) of the farm workers taken into the armed forces were drafted while the remaining 27 percent enlisted. Farm operators or managers constituted 27 percent of the 694,000 farm workers going into the armed forces during the year.

On the basis of available information, the entrance of nearly 700,000 farm workers into the armed forces during the year preceding September 1, 1942, as estimated from this survey, suggests a larger than proportionate contribution from the farm population of military age. This relatively large number of farm workers going into the armed forces is in part due to the fact that some of the farm workers were nonfarm residents. Figures previously available from other sources indicated a somewhat smaller number coming directly from farms into the armed forces, since they were based on the inductee's statement at the time he entered the army. The figures given here include also persons who left farms for nonfarm jobs and were subsequently inducted. Moreover, it is probable that farmers reported inductions and enlistments occurring over a longer than 12-month period, since patriotic pride in having family members in the service could easily have led to including some persons who were inducted before September 1, 1941 and also some who had not yet been inducted on September 1, 1942, but expected to be called soon thereafter.

Of the 921,000 farm workers who went into industrial employment, 697,000 left the farms and 224,000 accepted nonfarm employment but continued to live on the farms. Some of the latter group are no doubt available for part-time farm work especially during seasonal peaks even though they are primarily engaged in nonfarm work.

Manpower Losses Heavy Throughout the Country

Total losses of farm workers to industry and the armed forces were rather evenly divided between the northern and southern States of the country, although in relation to the volume of agricultural employment in these areas, losses from



the more industrialized northern tier of States were somewhat heavier than from the South (Table 2). Altogether the four geographic divisions comprising the New England, Middle Atlantic, East and West North Central States, lost 707,000 farm workers as compared with 732,000 from the South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central Divisions. The northern divisions, which had 38 percent of the country's farm employment on September 1, 1942, sustained 44 percent of the gross losses of farm workers that occurred in the year ending September 1, 1942. The southern divisions with 50 percent of the nation's farm employment had 45 percent of the gross losses. The Western States (the Mountain and Pacific Divisions) had a gross loss of 176,000 farm workers, or a slightly smaller proportion of total losses than agricultural employment in these States is of the United States total farm employment. However, the Western States because of their relatively high per farm employment show the highest loss rates per 100 farms.

Deviations from the above general pattern for the North, South, and West are to be noted, however, among the individual divisions, and some allowances need to be made for the fact that the loss estimates exclude seasonal hired workers, the use of which is relatively greater in the South than in some of the northern divisions.

Losses to the armed forces in the various divisions of the country represented one-fourth to one-half of total gross losses, with the exception of the West North Central States, where losses to the armed forces exceeded shifts into nonfarm employment, and of the Mountain States, where these two major types of losses were practically equal.¹ Movement of farm workers into industrial employment occurred in relatively large volume both within industrial areas as well as from non-industrial areas such as the East South Central and South Atlantic States.

Although the majority of persons who shifted to nonfarm employment moved away from the farms, the proportion continuing to live on the farms though employed at nonfarm jobs varied widely among divisions. This proportion was highest in the East North Central States where nearly 40 percent of the persons accepting nonfarm jobs continued their residence on farms.

Composition of Farm Working Force Changed

Gross losses, however, are not to be considered as net losses. The schedules indicate clearly that while many people were leaving farm employment, other persons were entering farm employment. The movement of farmers, family workers and year-round hired workers into industry or the armed forces and the replacements that have been made of these losses have caused marked changes in the composition of the working force on farms during the period September 1, 1941 to September 1, 1942. For the country as a whole, the gross loss of 1,615,000 farm workers has apparently been replaced, for the current estimates of farm employment by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and by the Bureau of the Census indicate practically the same level of employment in September of this year as in the same month of 1941. However, the September 1942 farm employment total for the United States consisted of nearly 500,000 fewer men 18 to 44 years old

than a year previously - a decrease of 10 percent. These were largely replaced by older men, women, youths of school age, and children (Table 3). There were nearly 6 percent more men over 45 years of age and 5 percent more adult women employed in agriculture in September of this year than in September a year ago, while the number of boys and girls 14 to 17 years of age was 14 percent greater. Children under 14 were utilized to a greater extent and their employment was 8 percent larger than in September of last year. While in September 1941, men between the ages of 18 and 44 constituted 44 percent of all farm employment, this proportion had shrunk by September 1, 1942 to 40 percent reflecting both the effects of the draft and movement into industry. On the other hand the proportion of older men - those 45 years and over - in total farm employment increased from 23 percent in September 1941 to slightly over 24 percent in September 1942.

In general, this process of replacement of losses of younger adult male farm workers by older persons, women and children has occurred in varying degrees in each section of the country. Changes in the composition of the farm working force during the past year in each of the geographic divisions of the country have been roughly similar to the pattern indicated for the country as a whole. Decreases in the younger men have been accompanied by increases in the employment of older men, adult women, and persons under 18 years of age. Not all of the geographic divisions, however, have been able or have found it necessary to make full replacement of the losses of agricultural workers that they have sustained during the past year. In all areas other than the Mountain and South Central States, replacements appear to have exceeded gross losses, as the current estimates of farm employment this September are higher than for last. The West South Central States showed the least replacements. In this division, consisting of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana, there was a net decrease in farm employment between September 1, 1941 and September 1, 1942 of 172,000 workers.

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Where losses of farm operators were reported, in only isolated cases did it mean that the farm was taken out of production. In the majority of cases the loss of the farm operator to the armed forces or to a nonfarm job meant replacement of the younger farm operator by some other member of the family, or the resumption of active operation of the farm by the father. In other cases, a neighbor combined the farm with his operating unit. There were also cases in which other persons took over these farm units.

Both Loss and Replacement Rates Higher on Larger Farms

Estimates of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics place the nation's farm employment of September 1, 1942 at approximately the same level as in 1941. Estimates of the Bureau of the Census show a slightly higher agricultural employment this September. These figures suggest virtually full replacement of the gross losses sustained. However not all farms were able to make full replacement of the workers who left. The results of this survey suggest that the farms employing larger than average number of workers were apparently able to replace losses more readily than the smaller farms. Employment on the larger farms tended to be more nearly equal to or higher than in September 1941, while on the smaller farms net decreases in employment were reported. This situation might be expected since the more commercial farms are in a better bargaining position for the available labor

supply and since many of the smaller, family farms apparently were able to carry on the farm work with a reduced number of workers by working more hours per week.

Gross losses of farm workers (although not necessarily net losses) have been disproportionately heavier on farms with larger acreages than on smaller ones (Table 4). The losses on the smallest farms, however, have also been disproportionately great. Farms in the size category of under 30 acres have experienced 19 percent of losses on all farms, even though the employment on farms in this size class constituted only 17 percent of all farm employment. Slightly over 300,000 workers who left farm employment during the past year came from farms under 30 acres in size. Farms with 30 to 69 acres contributed a percentage of losses smaller than their percentage of employment, and the same held true for each of the size groups up to farms of 140 acres or more in which the percentage of the total losses again exceeded the percentage of all farm workers.

Trends and Prospects

One of the questions asked of farmers in this survey dealt with the number of workers that they expected to have in September 1943. The replies obtained indicated that farmers were apprehensive with respect to the farm labor supply next year and in general, expected a considerably smaller volume of employment than they had this year. Translated into actual numbers, farmers were expecting an employment level on September 1, 1943 of 10,610,000, almost 800,000 less than on September 1 of this year, with males 18 to 44 expected to show a decrease of approximately 500,000. This pessimistic outlook on next year's labor supply was reflected even in the farmers' expectations concerning the number of women, youths and children likely to be employed.

Farmers' expectations concerning age-sex composition of farm employment in September 1943 are quite in keeping with the trend observed in the past two years. When expressed as percentages, the farmers' expectations indicated the proportion of men 18 to 44 to decrease from 40 percent of total employment in September 1942 to 38 percent. For every other group they expect in 1943 a percentage of total employment higher than in 1942: For men 45 years old and over, a change from 24 to 26 percent of total employment, for women 18 years old and over and for persons under 18 slight increases are anticipated in percentages of total employment.

Although farmers have experienced losses of manpower and expect further losses during the coming year, 67 percent indicated that they expected to handle as large a crop and livestock program in 1943 as they did in 1942. It is this proportion of farmers who answered "yes" when asked the question: "In view of the prospective labor situation for next year, do you believe this farm can handle as large an acreage of crops and as many head of livestock as in 1942?" Thirty-three percent answered "no" to this question, while less than 1 percent failed to reply. The highest proportion of farmers replying "yes" to this question was in the East North Central States where 76 percent answered in the affirmative. The lowest percentage of farmers answering "yes" was in the Mountain and South Atlantic States, where 61 percent of the farmers indicated that they expected to handle as large an acreage of crops and as many head of livestock in 1943 as in 1942. The answers to this question were conditioned to some extent by the experience of the reporting

farmers with loss of workers. Thus, in the Mountain States, where the loss rate of nonoperators was the highest in relation to the number of such workers employed, the proportion of farmers saying that they could not handle so large a crop and livestock program as in 1942 was also one of the highest. The percentage of farmers indicating that they expected to maintain next year's acreage and livestock numbers at least at this year's level varied inversely with the size of the farm. The highest percentages answering "yes" to the question of 1943 production plans came from farms in the smaller size groups and the lowest percentage from the largest size class (Table 8). In farms of under 140 acres in size two-thirds to three-fourths of the farmers thought that the labor situation next year would not curtail their production level below this year's. However, over half of the farmers operating units of 500 acres or more stated the belief that they would reduce operations next year.

When asked specifically as to the number of each of the major types of livestock that they intended to handle in 1943, farmers indicated increases in every class of livestock. In the case of hogs and pigs, farmers expected to have a 9 percent increase in 1943 over 1942. Similarly, for milk cows an increase of 5 percent was expected, for other cattle and for sheep and lambs, increases of 2 percent. Increases in the production of milk cows and hogs and pigs in 1943 were expected by farmers in each of the geographic divisions except the Pacific. Minor decreases were anticipated in beef cattle and in sheep and lambs in a few divisions - the former in the Middle Atlantic and West North Central, the latter in the Mountain and West North Central. With respect to livestock production therefore, farmers in general seem to believe that their anticipated decreases in manpower will not prevent them from producing more than they did this year.

Table 1.—Gross losses to farm employment of operators, other family workers, and year-round hired labor, September 1941 to September 1942, by specified reasons, United States

(Thousands of persons)

Reason for leaving farm employment	Farm operator:			Other family workers and year-round hired labor		
	Total	Manager	Total	Men	Women	
	:	:	:	:	:	
Total	1,615	381	1,234	1,112	122	
Entrance into armed forces ^{1/}	694	186	508	508	XXX	
Drafted	509	139	370	370	XXX	
Enlisted	185	47	138	138	XXX	
Shift to nonfarm employment	921	195	726	604	122	
Took nonfarm job and moved away	697	100	597	502	95	
Took nonfarm job but still live on farm	224	95	129	102	27	

^{1/} Probably includes an undetermined number of persons who entered the armed forces prior to September 1941.

Table 2.—Gross Losses of farm workers to the armed forces^{1/} or nonfarm employment and gross losses per 100 farms, September 1941 to September 1942, United States and geographic division

Area	Gross Losses (Thousands)	Gross Losses per 100 farms		Operator or manager: Nonoperator 2/
		Total		
UNITED STATES	1,615	29	7	22
New England	31	27	4	23
Middle Atlantic	103	33	8	25
East North Central	245	27	9	18
West North Central	328	32	8	24
South Atlantic	265	28	6	22
East South Central	259	27	7	20
West South Central	208	23	5	18
Mountain	93	43	6	37
Pacific	83	35	5	30

1/ Probably includes an undetermined number of persons who entered the armed forces prior to September 1941.

2/ Nonoperator losses include losses of family workers other than operators and of year-round hired workers.

Table 3.—Age and sex composition of farm employment, September 1, 1941 and September 1, 1942
United States

Age and sex of worker	September 1, 1941		September 1, 1942		Change 1941-1942	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	(Thousands)		(Thousands)		(Thousands)	
All types	11,421	100.0	11,390	100.0	-31	-0.3
Men 18-44	5,082	44.5	4,597	40.4	-485	-9.5
Men 45 and over	2,617	22.9	2,764	24.3	147	5.6
Women 18 and over	1,648	14.4	1,725	15.1	77	4.7
Boys and girls 14-17	1,121	9.8	1,280	11.2	159	14.2
Children under 14	953	8.4	1,024	9.0	71	7.5

Table 4.—Gross losses ^{1/} of farm workers to the armed forces and to nonfarm employment from September 1941 to September 1942, and estimated farm employment on September 1, 1942, by size-of-farm classes

Size of farm (Acres)	Farm employment September 1, 1942			Gross losses by types of workers		
	Number (Thousands)	Percent	Total (Thousands)	Percent (Thousands)	Operators and managers (Thousands)	Nonoperators ^{2/} (Thousands)
All sizes	11,390	100.0	1,615	100.0	381	1,234
Under 30	1,967	17.3	308	19.1	110	198
30 - 69	2,150	18.9	268	16.6	87	181
70 - 139	2,833	24.9	334	20.7	76	258
140 - 179	1,206	10.6	176	10.9	37	139
180 - 499	2,211	19.4	346	21.4	52	294
500 - 999	527	4.6	91	5.6	13	78
1,000 and over	496	4.3	92	5.7	6	86

^{1/} Probably includes an undetermined number of persons who entered the armed forces prior to September 1941.

^{2/} Includes family workers (other than operators) and year-round hired workers.

Table 5. - Age and sex composition of farm employment, September 1, 1942, for geographic divisions

Age and sex of worker	New		Middle		North		South		East		West	
	England:Atlantic:Central:(Pct.)		Central:Central:(Pct.)		Central:Atlantic:(Pct.)		South:Central:(Pct.)		South:Central:(Pct.)		West:Central:(Pct.)	
	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)	(Pct.)
All types	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men 18-44	44.9	42.8	36.1	41.0	39.1	36.7	41.2	48.8	47.2			
Men 45 and over	25.3	25.9	31.7	27.4	20.9	22.1	19.4	22.2	22.2			26.6
Women 18 and over	12.3	12.2	14.8	14.9	16.3	17.5	16.0	11.8	11.8			12.2
Boys and girls 14-17	11.2	14.2	9.9	9.2	12.2	11.9	12.2	10.4	10.4			10.2
Children under 14	6.3	4.9	7.5	7.5	11.5	11.8	11.2	6.8	6.8			10.1

Table 6.—Age and sex composition of farm employment, September 1, 1942, for size-of-farm classes, United States

Age and sex of worker	Size of farm (acres)					100.0 and over (percent) (percent)
	Under 30 : 30 - 69 : 70 - 139 : 140 - 179 : 180 - 199 : 200 - 999 : 1,000 and over (percent) (percent) (percent) (percent) (percent) (percent)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
All types	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men 18-44	28.9	32.6	38.9	36.7	41.1	45.0
Men 45 and over	30.0	27.8	25.9	25.5	25.1	22.2
Women 18 and over	16.9	16.2	15.7	16.2	15.2	13.5
Boys & Girls 14-17	14.7	12.7	10.7	12.3	10.4	10.2
Children under 14	9.5	10.7	8.8	9.3	8.2	9.1
						8.5

Table 7.-- Percentage distribution of farmers' replies to the question
"In view of the prospective labor situation for next year,
do you believe this farm can handle as large an acreage of
crops and as many head of livestock as in 1942?" United
States and geographic divisions

Area	Percent of replies		
	: Answering "Yes"	: Answering "No"	: No answer
UNITED STATES	66.6	32.7	0.7
New England	66.2	33.8	0.0
Middle Atlantic	70.9	28.7	0.4
East North Central	76.3	21.8	1.9
West North Central	65.9	33.5	0.6
South Atlantic	60.6	38.9	0.5
East South Central	67.6	32.2	0.2
West South Central	61.5	37.9	0.6
Mountain	61.1	38.4	0.5
Pacific	70.9	28.8	0.3

Table 8.-Percentage distribution of farmers' replies to the question
 "In view of the prospective labor situation for next year,
 do you believe this farm can handle as large an acreage of
 crops and as many head of livestock as in 1942?" for size-
 of-farm classes, United States

Size of farm	Percent of replies		
	Answering "Yes"	Answering "No"	No answer
All farms	66.6	32.7	0.7
0 - 29	76.8	22.5	0.7
30 - 69	71.5	27.5	1.0
70 - 139	67.4	32.1	0.5
140 - 179	65.5	33.9	0.6
180 - 499	51.1	48.4	0.5
500 - 999	42.4	56.4	1.2
1,000 and over	32.8	66.4	0.8

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